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E.O. 12958: 09/02/15
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [GG](#) [BO](#)
SUBJECT: Georgian Activists Released and Have Left
Belarus

Classified by Charge Constance Phlipot for Reasons 1.4
(B,D)

Refs: A) Minsk 1014, B) Minsk 1024

[1](#)1. (C) Summary: On September 2, two detained Georgians won their court appeal, were released, and immediately left Belarus for Kiev. The Kmara activists were arrested in Minsk on August 24 for invalid documents and then sentenced to 15 days for insulting their cellmate. With help from a Belarusian lawyer and Georgian diplomats from Kiev and Moscow, a judge upheld their appeal and ordered their release. End Summary.

[1](#)2. (C) On September 2, lawyer for the two jailed Georgians Vera Stremkovskaya contacted the Embassy to announce that her clients won their appeal and would immediately leave Belarus after spending nine days in jail (reftels). The deputy chairman of the Minsk City Court upheld the Georgians' appeal, ruling that the administrative charges should be dropped since the men's detainment was illegal and the reasons baseless.

[1](#)3. (C) The Moscow District Court judge who convicted the men for insulting their cellmate was allegedly very rude with the detainees and Stremkovskaya. During the appeal, he was reluctant to provide copies of court documents, interpreters, or witnesses. Stremkovskaya noted the work of foreign diplomats was a key element in the men's release. She could not, however, verify whether the city court judge decided himself to release the men or if he was ordered to do so. Stremkovskaya told the press that the Georgians were leaving the country voluntarily and were not being deported.

[1](#)4. (C) Post contacted the Georgian Consul from Kiev who verified the information as he boarded the plane for Kiev with the two detainees. He thanked the Embassy for its support and interest in the case.

PHLIPOT